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cont performed to determine if the current time is greater than or equal to the last evaluation time plus the predetermined evaluation time interval. Alternatively, the evaluation process may be triggered by an interrupt. In any event, when it is time to evaluate the QoS queue categorization, processing continues with step 330.

IN THE DRAWINGS

Please find included proposed changes to the drawings.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-3, 5-6, 9-20, 28-29, and 35-38 without prejudice.

Please add the following new claims.

39. (New) A method for bandwidth management in a packet forwarding device,

B3 comprising:

identifying a quality of service (QoS) metric corresponding to a traffic group, the QoS metric defining a minimum QoS for the traffic group;

receiving a data packet associated with the traffic group;

placing the data packet into one of a plurality of queues;

identifying a current measure of network performance with respect to parameters specified in the QoS metric; and

removing the data packet from the queue if a difference between the current measure and the minimum QoS falls within a threshold.

240. (New) The method of claim 39 wherein identifying the QoS metric corresponding to a traffic group further comprises:

identifying the traffic group through an Internet Protocol (IP) subnet membership identifier; and

determining a corresponding QoS metric defining a minimum QoS for the traffic group.

³
~~41.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein identifying the QoS metric corresponding to a traffic group further comprises:

identifying the traffic group through a media access control (MAC) address; and
determining a corresponding QoS metric defining a minimum QoS for the traffic group.

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~~42.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein identifying the QoS metric corresponding to a traffic group further comprises:

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identifying the traffic group through a virtual local area network (VLAN) identifier; and
determining a corresponding QoS metric defining a minimum QoS for the traffic group.

⁵
~~43.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein identifying the QoS metric comprises receiving information indicating a minimum bandwidth for the traffic group.

⁶
~~44.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein identifying the QoS metric comprises receiving information indicating a maximum sustained bandwidth for the traffic group.

⁷
~~45.~~ (New) The method of claim ⁶~~44~~ wherein identifying the QoS metric comprises receiving information indicating a peak bandwidth representing a bandwidth in excess of the maximum sustained bandwidth that the traffic group can utilize.

⁸
~~46.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein identifying the QoS metric comprises receiving information indicating a maximum allowable delay for the traffic group.

⁹
~~47.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein identifying the QoS metric comprises receiving information indicating a relative priority associated with the traffic group.

¹⁰
~~48.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein determining a current measure of network performance occurs at specified intervals of time.

¹¹
~~49.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein determining a current measure of network performance with respect to parameters specified in the QoS metric comprises calculating the current measure for the parameters specified in the QoS metric.

¹²
~~50.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein receiving the data packet comprises receiving the data packet on a first port of a plurality of ports, and wherein removing the data packet from the queue comprises transmitting the data packet from a second port of the plurality of ports.

¹³
~~51.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹~~39~~ wherein the packet forwarding device employs a non-deterministic access protocol.

¹⁴
~~52.~~ (New) The method of claim ¹³~~51~~ wherein the non-deterministic access protocol employed by the packet forwarding device is the Carrier Sense Multiple Access with Collision Detection (CSMA/CD) protocol.

¹⁵
~~53.~~ (New) An article of manufacture comprising a machine accessible medium having content that when accessed provides instructions to cause an electronic system to:

identify a quality of service (QoS) metric corresponding to a traffic group, the QoS metric defining a minimum QoS for the traffic group;

receive a data packet associated with the traffic group;

place the data packet into one of a plurality of queues;

identify a current measure of network performance with respect to parameters specified in the QoS metric; and

remove the data packet from the queue if a difference between the current measure and the minimum QoS falls within a threshold.

¹⁶
~~54.~~ (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵~~53~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to identify the QoS metric corresponding to a traffic group further comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to:

identify the traffic group through an Internet Protocol (IP) subnet membership identifier;

and

determine a corresponding QoS metric defining a minimum QoS for the traffic group.

¹⁷
~~55.~~ (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵~~53~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to identify the QoS metric corresponding to a traffic group further comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to:

identify the traffic group through a media access control (MAC) address; and

determine a corresponding QoS metric defining a minimum QoS for the traffic group.

¹⁸
~~56.~~ (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵~~53~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to identify the QoS metric corresponding to a traffic group further comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to:

identify the traffic group through a virtual local area network (VLAN) identifier; and

determine a corresponding QoS metric defining a minimum QoS for the traffic group.

¹⁹
~~57.~~ (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵~~53~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to identify the QoS metric comprises the content to

provide instructions to cause the electronic system to receive information indicating a minimum bandwidth for the traffic group.

²⁰
~~28~~. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵~~53~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to identify the QoS metric comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to receive information indicating a maximum sustained bandwidth for the traffic group.

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cont
²¹
~~59~~. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ²⁰~~58~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to identify the QoS metric comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to receive information indicating a peak bandwidth representing a bandwidth in excess of the maximum sustained bandwidth that the traffic group can utilize.

²²
~~60~~. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵~~53~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to identify the QoS metric comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to receive information indicating a maximum allowable delay for the traffic group.

²³
~~61~~. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵~~53~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to identify the QoS metric comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to receive information indicating a relative priority associated with the traffic group.

²⁴
~~62~~. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵~~53~~ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to determine a current measure of network

performance comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to determine the current measure at specified intervals of time.

²⁵₆₃. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵₅₃ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to determine a current measure of network performance with respect to parameters specified in the QoS metric comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to calculate the current measure for the parameters specified in the QoS metric.

B3 Cont
²⁶₆₄. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵₅₃ wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to receive the QoS metric comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to receive the data packet on a first port of a plurality of ports, and wherein the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to remove the data packet from the queue comprises the content to provide instructions to cause the electronic system to transmit the data packet from a second port of the plurality of ports.

²⁷₆₅. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ¹⁵₅₃ wherein the packet forwarding device employs a non-deterministic access protocol.

²⁸₆₆. (New) The article of manufacture of claim ²⁷₆₅ wherein the non-deterministic access protocol employed by the packet forwarding device is the Carrier Sense Multiple Access with Collision Detection (CSMA/CD) protocol.